

## How to Do GKAS Media Interviews – 2009

Spokespersons should...

Crystallize for reporters in a few, extremely brief sentences what Give Kids A Smile is, the larger issue of access to oral health care and how your local Give Kids A Smile event can help, but not solve the overall problem of access to oral health care for children from low-income families.

Talking points are helpful, but try to put things in your own words and discuss the issues in ways that are relevant to the local situation.

Tips to keep in mind:

Relax and speak in a conversational tone. Try to imagine the reporter is a neighbor or patient and you're explaining Give Kids A Smile and access to oral health care. Convey interest, concern and confidence.

State the most important information first; then provide background information.

Be concise and clear. Print reporters will want more depth than broadcast journalists because they have more space to run stories.

Don't use technical jargon — remember you're speaking to a lay audience. For instance, instead of "restorations," say "fillings and crowns."

Most broadcast interviews will be taped and edited before aired. The reporter will probably pull out a 10-15 second sound bite from your interview and summarize the rest of the information you provide.

Think before you speak. It is easier to edit out a silence than many "umms" and "aahs."

The reporter wants your voice on tape, so avoid simply answering "yes" or "no" to questions — expand and provide details that help tell the story.

A brief story of a child in dire need of access to oral health care is a much more memorable interview than a lot of statistics, which the reporter can pick up anyway from your press materials.

Describe in general terms one of the worst pediatric cases you've seen due to lack of access to oral health care, then bridge to what your dental society would like to see happen to improve access in your state.

For television interviews, always look at the interviewer, not the camera. The cameraperson will find you.

Remember that anything you say to a reporter before, during and after the interview can be used in the story. There is no such thing as "off the record," so if you don't want your comment to appear in the story, don't say it.